

THE
AMERICAN
SUNDAY-SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER, 1827.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MAGAZINE.

It would be nothing better than a work of supererogation, were we at this late day, to attempt to prove the importance of the American Sunday-school Union, or to seek to establish the utility of the American Sunday-school Magazine. Happily, both these topics are placed beyond the necessity of argument. We can appeal for both, to that faithful arbiter of all such questions, experience; and experience has long since given her decision in a voice which has been heard in every section of these United States. Still the "Union" may be receiving continual accession to its strength, and the "Magazine," by which this union sends forth its regular intelligence, and gives its supply of advice and exhortation to those engaged in the sacred cause, even in the humblest village in the land, may be made to increase in usefulness as it increases in years. It is to this latter subject, that we purpose to dedicate a few columns of the present number, and we deem our observations particularly timely, as

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the present number closes the fourth volume issued under the auspices of the American Union. We would wish that the commencement of the fifth volume may be marked by an effort to render the Magazine still more useful, by bringing to its pages, the powerful contributions of those whose talents and piety and experience, enable them to write on subjects connected with the Sunday-school enterprise, in a manner which shall at once commend it to the better judgment of the community at large, and the more zealous and persevering efforts of its friends. It is through the medium of the press, that the general cause of the Lord Jesus Christ is making such rapid advances in a world which lieth in wickedness; and it is through the medium of the press, that the benefits and advantages of the Sunday-school enterprise are to be fully stated and widely disseminated. We have great reason to be thankful for what the press has already done in this cause, and there is now scarcely a religious paper on our

table, which has not some portion dedicated to this interesting subject. It is almost as common to observe in the religious journals—"the Sabbath-school department,"—as the Missionary, and these are portions which are looked for with decided interest. Among the many mediums through which piety and talents may be turned to beneficial account, we consider the pages of this Magazine, as by no means the least important, and why should not those who are able, determine to give to so extensive a work, their original contributions? We ask that the friends of the Sunday-school enterprise, would most seriously consider this subject, and write for the Magazine on those topics which are appropriate to its pages. Every consideration induces us to urge this with zeal and earnestness—for we have readers in every class of the community. The Sunday-school teacher especially looks to us, not only for such intelligence as may comfort him amidst his arduous duties by the assurance that the sacred cause in which he is so zealously engaged, is every where advancing, but he looks to us as the medium of communication, through which he is to receive the benefit of any new light, which the experience and the piety of others may reflect upon the subject. No christian, and especially no christian minister will urge, that the subject is not sufficiently elevated for the exertion of his zeal and talents—for it is confessedly one, whose moral grandeur is scarcely exceeded by the most cherished religious enterprises of the day—we mean the Bible, and the Missionary causes; and if it is of high importance that every effort should be

made through the medium of the press—to place the Bible, and the Missionary, and the Tract causes before the public mind, in every shape calculated to excite and to perpetuate interest, it is no less important that this should also be done on the kindred subject of the Sunday-school. While then, we hope, that every religious newspaper in the land, will give its weekly portion of intelligence on this great subject, we sincerely hope, that besides the means which are at present in our power in relation to this Magazine, we may be enabled to offer to our readers much original matter, on every topic connected with our great design. We ask—who will consecrate his service to the Lord in this form of well doing?

The committee of publication, to whom is entrusted the general superintendence of the Magazine, have at previous periods, made most liberal offers for all original communications which shall be judged by them well adapted to the purposes for which the Magazine is established. Compared with the benefit which may result to the cause of Christ, the offer of a pecuniary compensation, can have but little weight with any friend of the cause of Sunday-schools. But as we well know that time is valuable to all, and while there are so many ways of doing good, we have no right to ask, without at least the offer of what may be something of an equivalent—it is again repeated, that for all original communications which shall be accepted and published, the author will receive *one dollar for every printed page*. While this offer, which is a large one for the Society to make, may be

to many, a matter of little moment, we solicit our friends, for the sake of the cause in which their labours and their hearts are engaged, to contribute freely their communications; so that by a general effort, the magazine may become a source of mutual instruction and delight to all. There is, perhaps, no teacher under whose observation events do not occur, which would interest the readers of this publication, and if each would contribute according to his ability, the general fund, thus accumulated, would become a treasure of great value and common benefit.

SABBATH DAY IN INFANT SCHOOLS.

The institution of Infant schools is becoming a subject of great interest to the religious public, and every record is worthy of notice which is calculated to throw any light upon the best method of conducting them. The following article will not fail to be interesting.

We assemble the largest of the children in the school room on the Sabbath, and instruct them in the duty of keeping holy that day, and in Scripture history with the use of pictures. The plan I have adopted seems well calculated to make the children acquainted with the sacred volume. I place the picture on the lesson post before the children in the gallery, and read that portion of Scripture which it represents: if the nativity of our Saviour, I begin by reading slowly the 2d chapter of Luke, pausing at the end or middle of a verse, and then question the children; if they cannot answer, I read it again, till they give their attention to it, and I always explain the meaning of the words as I proceed. For instance, I read, "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a

decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." I ask, "what came to pass in those days?" They answer, "there went forth a decree." I explain the meaning of the word decree. I ask them who gave that decree? They answer Cæsar Augustus. I ask, what did he order in that decree? They answer, that all the world should be taxed. I then explain what taxing means, and so on through what relates to the birth of Christ as represented in that picture. We then change it to another which represents the wise men guided by the star, and presenting to Jesus their treasures, and read the 2d chapter of Matthew.

The children who first entered the school, are very expert in the history of the creation of the world and of the birth of Christ, yet not one of them can read. They likewise are very dexterous in adding, subtracting, and saying the multiplication tables, by means of the transposition frame; and another frame I have, for placing the card figures in, as described by Wilderspin. Our number now consists of 130. All under six years, and nearly all under five, many under three, and some under two years. We have lately been accommodated with another room which makes our apartments 60 by 30 feet, with a gallery and class room at one end. We pay an annual rent of 180 dollars, keep the premises in repair, and make our own fixtures. We have followed partly Mr. Wilderspin, and partly Mr. Wilson's plans. The lesson posts as recommended by the latter, we find very convenient, as it saves the necessity of stools for the monitors, and also answers the purpose of a table for the children to place the letters on. We always make the children march out and march into the school room.—As they always sit in the same place, they know exactly where their place is in the ranks. If a child leaves his place and runs across the room, we turn him behind the last one, and if very refractory, we make him sit down, and do not permit him to march at that time, which is a great disappointment, as they are highly delighted with the exercise.

1500 SUNDAY SCHOLARS SUPPLIED WITH
TESTAMENTS BY THE ZEAL AND EN-
ERGY OF ONE MAN.

The St. Lawrence County Bible Society, New York, we believe, furnished some time ago, every destitute family within their limits, with a copy of the Scriptures. An effort of equal importance is now making in the same county, to supply the destitute Sabbath-schools with the Scriptures. The corresponding secretary of the St. Lawrence Bible Society, John Fine, Esq. having first ascertained that of 2023 members of Sabbath-schools, who are capable of reading, there are now 1485 who are not supplied with the Bible or the Testament,—has issued a circular, urging upon the friends of the cause, the immense importance of attending to this matter. He says, "I shall assume the responsibility of ordering from New York, without delay, 1500 Testaments, that we may have them before the winter, to supply the present schools, and encourage the formation of new ones. If you will not assist in defraying the expense, the burden and the reward will be all my own: but you are cordially invited to share in this delightful work, and to partake of its blessings." What may not be done when this work is thus energetically undertaken.—The following is a further extract from the circular alluded to, and the appeal is one of exceeding energy.

"It is hoped that no argument is necessary at this period of Christian enterprise, to convince you that the prosperity and glory, if not the existence of the Christian church, is connected with the welfare of Sabbath-schools. The object of this letter is to impart the information I have collected, and to announce to the Christian public, that an opportunity is now offered of doing much good at a little expense. From every town and every district within the county, let a contribution be taken up and sent to the Bible Society, at their annual meeting, &c. for the purpose of supplying the Sabbath-schools with the Scriptures.

"Ye ministers of the gospel, say not that your people are too poor,

and there is no money. This excuse for your indifference to Sabbath-schools, may not abide the scrutiny of the last day.

"Ye laymen, who lead in public exercises, and exhort sinners to repentance, come forward in this work of benevolence, and show your readiness and joy to do the will of your heavenly Father!

"And ye parents, who believe in a heaven and a hell, and would rejoice to see your children the citizens of the New Jerusalem, close not your hands to the wants of the Sabbath-school.

"We are now solicited to confer a favour on the cause of the Bible and the Sabbath-school, by our exertions and gifts. There was a time when they were dependent, in some measure, on the favour and caprice of men; but that time has gone by, never to return. The Author of the Bible and the great Superintendent of Sabbath-schools has lent them his patronage, and they are now marching forward with astonishing and almost irresistible progress. The voice of God's providence to you is, the field is ripe for the sickle; if you will enter in and labour, and receive wages, it is well; if not, the service will be performed by others, and you will lose the reward.

"To those Christians who live in towns where there are no Sabbath-schools, I would observe: you are behind the Christian world twenty years; and if you do not rouse from your indolence, and go forward, you will be in danger of relapsing into heathenism. Every church must have a Sabbath-school, or it cannot prosper.—Think not that this institution is intended for the children of the poor only. In Great Britain, when they were first established, they were designed, and are still chiefly used, for the benefit of the poor. But it is not so in our country. We have none so poor whose children cannot be admitted into the district school through the week. The rich and the learned need crave no higher honour for their children, than to be among the first at the Sabbath-school."

SUNDAY-SCHOOL OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH,
WORTHINGTON, OHIO.

The board have lately received the annual report of the first director of this school, Mr. Isaac N. Whiting, and we lay before the readers of the Magazine some very valuable and interesting extracts. It is necessary to premise, that this school was organized on the 20th of August, 1826, commencing with 75 scholars, and 12 teachers; and that up to April 16th, 1827, it consisted of 150 scholars, and 18 teachers. Its numbers had been as high as 177 scholars, and 23 teachers, but as is observed in the report,—

It is proper to remark, that 19 of the scholars, composing the first division of the Bible class in the male department, who have left the school, are attached to Kenyon College, and have pursued, regularly, their Biblical studies, since leaving our school.

Our limits do not allow us to enter into the details of this report, but it is filled with so many judicious observations, that we shall allow as much space for extracts as can possibly be spared.

"It is our aim," says the first director, "to have all the exercises of the school conducted as much as possible in catechetical forms—convinced as we are, that that is the only course which can be adopted with children in Sunday-schools, to be really and extensively useful. While it impresses their lessons more deeply and permanently on their memories than any other system, it has a valuable tendency in expanding the mind, and bringing it into active operation. It also requires them to read with more attention, to associate ideas, to compare various parts of Scripture, and to judge of their particular application. For children to commit large portions of any work, and especially of the Scriptures, without frequent examinations on them, has few advantages attending it. They soon

forget them, or, if they are not entirely forgotten, they not unfrequently form a mere confused medley of words, without being understood, or leaving any valuable and lasting impressions. This course likewise affords the teachers numerous opportunities of explaining to their pupils, in a familiar way, adapted to their capacities and comprehension, whatever may excite their attention, and of illustrating his remarks by some apt anecdote or striking scene."

This subject is too delicate for us to venture a decided opinion upon it.

Wherever indolence, insubordination, and irregular attendance are observable on the part of pupils, we fear, if teachers and parents were to examine themselves impartially, and trace the cause to its real source, it would be found in themselves, and not in the absence of rewards.—*In those places in which we have contemplated schools languishing, we have generally found a lamentable want of system in their arrangements, inattention on the part of teachers and parents, the almost entire absence of prayer to God for his blessings on their exertions, a distrust of those aids from heaven for which they are taught to look, and want of union of co-operation in teachers and superintendents.*

On the subject of libraries, the report of Mr. Whiting is equally judicious.

The recent introduction of libraries into Sunday-schools, should be ranked among the most important measures which have engaged the attention of their friends. They will unquestionably have the effect to increase and keep up the general spirit of these schools, more than any other scheme which has been adopted. Till recently, the procuring of books of a character well calculated to supply the demands of our schools, in this respect was attended with no inconsiderable difficulties and expense. These obstacles are now greatly diminished by the publications of the *American Sunday-School Union*. Through the active enterprise of this society, facilities are now opened for obtaining valuable and

generally judiciously selected works to a large extent, and at prices so exceedingly low, as to place them within the means of almost every school.

It would be impracticable to attempt the ascertainment of the intrinsic and prospective benefits resulting from the general establishment of Sunday-school libraries. To keep up an active zeal among the pupils and punctuality in their attendance, they will be found to surpass any other regulations which have ever been introduced. And their general and practical effects on society at large, will also be highly salutary, if not beyond computation. For children and young persons to be early imbued with a desire for procuring and reading religious and other appropriately selected works, should be regarded a happy and auspicious event in their lives. When we have once succeeded in establishing this propensity in them, we shall have made no inconsiderable advancement in withdrawing their minds from much that is trivial and unproductive, not to say highly pernicious, and have become instrumental in implanting many excellent and valuable principles and precepts, which under divine grace, may prove the ground work of future usefulness and eminence. Nor will the interesting and instructive matter with which the pages of these publications are usually furnished, be confined alone to the pupils of Sunday-schools, since each one having the permission to take a volume home, on every week, many of their parents will doubtless read them with attention, and derive from them, not only much valuable information of a secular nature, but, under the blessing of heaven, these silent and unobtrusive little messengers, may awaken the slumbering sinner from his supineness and disregard to things of eternity, lead him to that repentance for his past offences, and induce him to seek for that renovation of heart and life, without which he will be unqualified for the enjoyments of the kingdom of God. Like the propitious showers of heaven, descending and fertilizing the vegetable world, their

benign influences will extend and be felt in the remotest regions, and intermingled with every class of society.

We cannot close our extracts from this truly interesting report, without calling the attention of the "heads of the church," and parents generally, to the following observations.

But notwithstanding, our school has continued to increase, and is still in a flourishing condition, the first director would respectfully remind the members, and especially those who are heads of families, that its future prosperity and success are somewhat dependent on them. However pure and exalted may be the motives of teachers in engaging in this noble cause, it is right and proper while they continue with unwearied assiduity and attention in instructing the young in those things which pertain to their eternal interests, that they should be gratified with the countenance and approbation of those advanced in years, and occupying influential stations in society. While the youth under their charge look up to them for example and instruction, our young teachers in return look up to parents for direction and aid. The duties of a Sunday-school teacher are exceedingly arduous, and many are the perplexities and difficulties with which he is called to contend. Parents have it in their power to diminish very many of these, and to promote the cause to no inconsiderable extent, without occupying much time or expending much money. By occasionally attending the meetings of the society and visiting the school, they would greatly animate and encourage both teachers and scholars; the former to increased exertions, and the latter to punctuality in their attendance, and attention to their studies. Conversing with their children on the nature of their studies, explaining to them select parts of Scripture, encouraging them to commit to memory their assigned portions, enforce on them the advantages which they will derive from a constant attendance on these schools, the necessity of their paying strict attention to

the regulations of the school and the directions of their teachers, and endeavour to have them in readiness at the hour appointed for opening the school; these, and such little attentions on the part of parents, would have a most happy and beneficial tendency, without occupying much of their time. When children observe their parents indifferent and inattentive to these considerations, they are apt themselves to become so in a little time. On the other hand, when parents manifest an interest in these things, their children, imperceptibly imbibing the spirit and feelings which obviously actuate them, they will regard these schools, as they in truth are, blessings extended to them of no ordinary character, and their permission to attend them, as a privilege of the highest moment.

The topics alluded to in this extract are so vitally important, that we shall take some future occasion to make enlarged observations.

SABBATH-SCHOOL CONCERT OF PRAYER.

We observe in a New York paper, a recommendation from a friend of Sunday-schools in Lexington, Kentucky, that the last Monday in each month should be set apart for a concert of prayer to be observed by teachers, and that, "*at the same time their joint petitions may ascend to a throne of grace, in behalf of the Sunday-school cause.*"

This notice of a practice which deserves on all hands the highest commendation, is one which claims the particular regard of those who have at heart the interests of Sunday-schools. Arising, as this intimation appears to do, without any knowledge of similar views having before summoned Sunday-school labourers to join in a general and united appeal to the giver of all good, we are

struck with the coincidence of thought which, in this instance, has brought Christians in one quarter of the country, to adopt a plan which their brethren elsewhere had long pursued with equal profit and delight.

Another thought which occurs to us is, the necessity of a medium of common communication, for those who are engaged in similar pursuits. Did all our Sabbath-school teachers know what their brethren were doing in this field of labour,—were they early acquainted with each other's trials, difficulties, and their successes; their varied experiments and spirited enterprizes,—how much should we all be improved and encouraged? This we say in favour of the Sunday-School Magazine, for had this publication been more generally circulated in the country from which this proposition comes, these our friends would probably long since have united with their fellow labourers on the Atlantic coast, in observing the *Monthly Concert of Prayer for Sunday-schools*, on the second Monday in the month. This matter was brought before the public from many sources simultaneously in 1824, as appears in the August number of the American Sunday-School Magazine for that year. The religious newspapers throughout the country, took up the subject with eager interest. And in the month of September, concert prayer meetings were held, and the American Sunday-School Union requested to give their recommendation to the time generally agreed upon as the most suitable; viz. the *second Monday evening* in the month. This was done by a unanimous vote of the Board of Managers; and this time has been from

that period to the present, regularly observed as a season sacred to the cause, throughout almost every section of our country. The measure has been hailed with delight in England, and the friends of Sunday-schools in that country on the same evening, join their prayers with our's for God's blessing on our common labours.

For the American Sunday-School Magazine.

A kind patron has made a present to our Sunday-school of a valuable library, which must be worth, even at the very low prices of your books, at least thirty or forty dollars. Permit me to ask an important question through your wide circulating Magazine. How can our school make the best use of this treasure? It is a new thing with us, and we ask advice of those who have had experience, hoping to profit by their wisdom, and anxious to make our *talent* as productive as possible. B.

We are pleased with this application for intelligence made through our pages, to all who have had libraries under their care, and we look for answers. We are happy also to exhibit this not very unfrequent mode adopted by patrons to show their regard for the institutions with which their names stand connected before the public. We are not unused to having orders left at our Bookstore, for an entire library, to be given to a school; and even payment has been made without either ourselves or the recipients knowing the names of the donors.—ED.

KENYON COLLEGE, WORTHINGTON, OHIO.

At the late convention in this diocese, a society was formed and approved by an almost unanimous vote,

of which one of the leading objects is to circulate Sunday-school publications in that growing and important section of the Union. The following is an extract from the letter of the Corresponding Secretary, dated,

Worthington, Ohio, Sep. 22, 1827.

With the exception of such books as the peculiarities of our church render necessary, and which the possession of a press of our own will enable us to furnish, we wish to obtain our books from your Society. We intend to establish a Depository immediately, at present, to be located at Worthington, but with the removal of the college to be transferred to Gambier, Knox County, and should our undertaking be prospered, and have God's blessing, we expect to be able to purchase of you to a considerable amount.

The importance of our society we conceive to be very great.

A depository connected with the college, and accessible to a large body of students, and under the control of an executive committee composed of its officers, possesses advantages, which, with other considerations, will recommend it, I doubt not, to all the favour and support you are authorized to bestow.

With prayers for your abundant success in the great cause in which you are engaged, I remain, dear sir,

Your's respectfully,

M. T. C. WING,

Corresponding Secretary, P. T. S. S. S.

ADDRESS

OF THE PHILADELPHIA SUNDAY-SCHOOL
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

At a period when Sunday-schools are established in almost every part of our land, and their salutary influence on society so generally acknowledged, it would seem unnecessary to explain their objects, and to make known their advantages, were not their real nature and design still imperfectly understood, and even misrepresented by many who profess to be among their warmest friends.

Sunday-schools have been in successful operation in this country, for more than twelve years, and yet to this day there are thousands of individuals of information and influence, and even ministers of the gospel, many of whom believe that these schools are exclusively designed for the benefit of the poor.

This erroneous idea, so widely circulated, has presented a most formidable obstacle to the success of Sabbath-school exertions. And the Association of Sunday-school teachers have reason to believe, that as long as it prevails, a large and interesting portion of the community will not avail themselves of the benefits of Sabbath-school instruction, which is equally adapted to all classes in society of a suitable age.

In our highly favoured country, especially in its cities and villages, where the means of acquiring a common school education are accessible to almost every class of the community, it ought not to be supposed that Sunday-school teachers propose to themselves, in their self-denying and arduous duties, no higher aim than to impart the rudiments of this kind of knowledge, and to enable the children of the poor to read.

Their object is, chiefly, to communicate moral and religious instruction, in a manner suited to the understandings of the children and youth of their charge—to form those virtuous habits which will have a most salutary influence in after life—to teach them the knowledge of God, and their duties and obligations as rational and as immortal beings: that *this* kind of knowledge is needful for the children of the higher classes and the wealthy, we presume few will be willing to deny.

If our churches and the preached gospel, if the joys and the glories of eternity are not designed exclusively for the poor, neither then are Sabbath-school and Bible class instructions.

These institutions are intended for all ranks and conditions in life; and, in many sections of our land, the poor are the only class who exclude themselves from their benefits.

It is a lamentable truth, that in most

of our common schools, as well as in many of our colleges and respectable seminaries of learning, no religious instruction is imparted; and thus thousands of youth are permitted to grow up in ignorance of the first principles of Christianity; imbibing sentiments prejudicial both to morality and religion.

It is sometimes urged that parents, possessing ordinary intelligence, can impart to their children all the instruction which may be needful; but are all such really competent to discharge this duty? Have all such the time or the inclination? Do even *Christian parents* assemble their children around them, and with all the earnestness which their responsibilities demand, endeavour to communicate that instruction to their children which may make them wise unto salvation? It is evidently too much neglected. And if parents do not perform this all important duty, surely no *reasonable* objections can be made to placing their children in Sabbath-schools, or in select Bible classes, which are forming in many of our congregations.

The classes are generally conducted by teachers who have been engaged for many years in qualifying themselves to interest and benefit the young, and they ask no other reward than the pleasure which arises from the consciousness of doing good to others.

This method of conveying instruction has been attended with the most signal success; it presents incentives to industry and application, and has peculiar attractions to youth, who can soon discover that the teachers are among their best friends.

Sunday-schools are preparing the way for the reception of the gospel, and the members of the Association of Teachers feel a confident assurance that ministers who are interested can do much to further their design. Let the subject be pressed upon all classes of their hearers, and upon those particularly whose standing and influence render them likely to be most successful among the higher circles of life. Urging upon individuals who possess the requisite qualifications, to become instructors. Let

Sunday-schools and Bible classes be exhibited in their true character. Let them receive from the influential members of our congregations, that support which their importance demands, and they will soon become as universal as they are calculated to be beneficial.

Not only the influential and the wealthy, but every individual may do something to render more extensively useful this cause which God has so abundantly blessed. Surely, then, they who desire to see the young rising up in moral and virtuous habits—all the lovers of social order and domestic happiness, should cheerfully aid this cause, fraught with interest to the rising generation, who must soon be the support of the church of Christ—in whose hands must soon rest the destinies of our beloved country.

In behalf of the Association of Sunday-School Teachers.

JOHN C. PECHIN,
Chairman of the Committee.

A PLAN PROPOSED.

Mr. Editor,

Dear Sir—If you think this paper contains any ideas, which, by coming into collision with those of other minds, might strike out a new one, you are at liberty to publish it.

Respectfully your's, &c.

A TEACHER.

Harrisburg, Nov. 20, 1827.

The contemplation of the Sabbath-school system, in its present flourishing condition, often awakens in my bosom emotions of the most pleasing kind, and excites the most devout gratitude to the King and Head of the church. I love to reflect, from what small beginnings this great evangelizing scheme sprang, on the difficulties and oppositions which it has overcome, both from without and from within; and how, out of them all, the Lord has delivered it. I love to reflect upon the establishment of the Sunday and Adult School Union, and its successful operations; and with still greater pleasure do I contemplate the more noble establishment

which has been erected on the foundation laid by that Union. It has been to me a source of pleasure also, to see so much piety, intelligence, and respectability combined in its Board of Managers; and also to see the order, system, and economy introduced into its operations. But it appears to me, there is yet a defect in the general system, so intimately connected with its most vital parts, as to very materially retard its progress to the acme of its glory, and in a great measure prevent the accomplishment of the ultimate object of the institution. I allude to the want of some systematic plan or arrangement connected with every school, for the purpose of replenishing it with competent, well-informed, and devoted teachers. The want of suitable teachers has been a grievance and a subject of complaint with those who have been conversant with Sabbath-schools, and who understand the nature of a teacher's duty. Where Sabbath-schools are established, the want of teachers is generally so disproportionate to the number of suitable persons, who are willing to engage in that self-denying, though most laudable work, that in selecting them, but little regard can be paid to their qualifications. And notwithstanding this great want, some have even been so preposterous as to think that it is altogether unbecoming for fathers and mothers, and persons possessed of age and experience, to assume the instruction of youth; and that the important work of "training up a child in the way he should go," is only suitable for the young and inexperienced, and often the volatile and ignorant! While such is the case, most of the good designed to be effected by Sabbath-schools, must remain unaccomplished. There is an important link in the chain wanting: children, ready to receive instruction, may be found in abundance; suitable books, and every other article necessary for conducting a Sabbath-school successfully, have also been provided; but no provision has been made to secure a competent number of well qualified teachers to communicate the instruction. Now to supply this deficiency,

allow me to suggest the following plan:

Select, by the aid of the superintendent, the oldest, most promising, and best informed scholars, of both sexes, to the number of 8, 10, or 12, if that number can be had, of such as are willing to become teachers, after having received proper instruction; and to this number add any other persons who can be got to join the class with the same view. In selecting persons for this class, prefer pious persons if a sufficient number can be had; if not, take the most sober-minded and moral. Over this class, place as instructor, an elderly man of intelligence and undoubted piety, if such a person can be procured; and if not, take the best qualified teacher from one of the classes. And let him meet his class at the usual school hours, either in the school room or in some adjacent one, and conduct them through a regular course of instruction, calculated, particularly, in all its parts to qualify his pupils, in the period of one or two years, to take the charge of a class in a Sabbath-school, and teach it with credit to himself, and advantage to those under his care. The exercises during school hours, which at present appear to me most proper, are, a careful reading of the Scriptures in regular course from the beginning of the Bible, accompanied with copious explanations, and a close application of the truth to the conscience. In the discharge of this part of his duty, let the instructor so conduct in the manner and in the matter of his instructions, that in learning his pupils how to teach a class, he may with confidence and propriety refer them to his own conduct. Accompanying the reading of the Scriptures, let there be recitations from "Watts' Scripture History." I would not require answers to be given in the very words of the book, but in the scholar's own language, with tolerable correctness: reading the lesson four or five times over, will be sufficient for this purpose. And in addition to this, advise the scholars to read carefully some approved commentary on the portion of Scripture which will be the reading lesson on the ensuing

Sabbath. Frequently during the year, the instructor should give them, either by lectures at stated periods or otherwise, particular instructions with regard to the behaviour a teacher ought to observe towards his class; the importance of vital piety, and exemplary conduct in a Sabbath-school teacher; and what should be the great end of all his labours in that capacity.

This plan, if well understood, and pursued with zeal under the eye of piety and intelligence, will, I feel confident, in a few years at most, entirely remove the evil complained of.

NATURAL HISTORY—*Selected from the Youth's Friend.—American Sunday-School Union. 144 pages. Price 18 cents, with the usual discounts.*

Our limits do not often admit of a detailed view of the different publications which issue from the Society's press. Nor is it necessary. Time is daily adding proofs of the existence of a confidence extended to the works bearing the impress of the American Sunday-School Union, which is at once gratifying and conclusive; and little more is necessary to add on this head, than to assure the friends and patrons of Sunday-schools, that the same guarded caution shall still be maintained in selecting and preparing books, which has heretofore guided the labours of the Committee.

The work at the head of this article is named, chiefly to illustrate, by a reference to its price, the great economy in publication, secured by the establishment of the National Society. It contains *twenty-eight cuts* of different subjects in natural history, and is sold to auxiliary schools at 13½ cts. each.

For the American Sunday-School Magazine.

In the October number of the Sunday-School Magazine we have seen

an extract of a letter from a gentleman in Columbia, Pa. giving a statement of Sunday-school operations in that town. Of the school with which he is connected, he remarks, that "the general attendance in this school is between 120 and 140 scholars, under the care of 24 teachers. There is no doubt but our school would be abundantly more useful, if we could obtain the *gratuitous* labours of qualified teachers, but they are not to be had. In the school attached to our church, there is a great deficiency of male teachers, &c."

Now, Mr. Editor, we have had some experience in Sunday-schools, and should suppose, that where there are 24 teachers in one school, there can be no great want, especially if they are well *qualified*; and if they are not qualified, this number is certainly more than enough for any useful purpose.

We would embrace this occasion to mention a plan proposed at a meeting of the Association of Sunday-school Teachers, in Philadelphia, by which it is believed, one experienced teacher could effect more good than a score of those who possess no requisite qualifications, and perhaps feel but little interest in the work.

In many of our large schools there is a want of suitable teachers, and some of the classes are under the care of those who impart no religious instruction, and others who do not even preserve order in their classes. Teachers in such schools, whose services are really valuable, often find it difficult to gain the attention of the class, as their thoughts are diverted by the noise and confusion attendant upon 10 or 12 classes reciting at the same time, and the smaller children talking or engaged in play. To obviate these difficulties, let an experienced, faithful teacher undertake to instruct, in a separate room, from thirty to sixty children who are able to read, after the plan of a Bible class: let him adopt the selected lessons, and question and examine the class collectively; and, having previously prepared himself, explain the lessons in a familiar manner, and press upon the understandings of the youth,

such religious instruction as he may be enabled to give.

This plan has been tried, and found to be an improvement in Sabbath-school teaching. With the use of alphabetical cards, &c. its benefits are extended to the smallest classes which are formed into infant schools. The teacher having a room to himself, is enabled to engage the attention of the whole school, and to speak without any unusual exertion, with much more satisfaction to himself, and, it is likely, with more benefit to the children.

In making the above remarks, we have departed from our intention, which was merely to notice a singular expression in the extract of a letter to which we have referred: of the "*gratuitous labours*" there spoken of, we are really at a loss what opinion to form, unless it is to be understood, that in some instances Sabbath-school services are paid for: and to receive pay would, we conceive, *disqualify* any teacher.

We do not know of any Sunday-school teachers, who do not pay something for the privilege of labouring in this blessed cause, and we do know some who contribute a considerable portion of their income to its support.

But among 20,000 teachers, scattered over our extensive country, if there be an individual who receives any pecuniary compensation as a Sabbath-school teacher, we desire to be informed of it—for of such a one we have never heard.

Sunday-school teachers, who have for years been pursuing their self-denying duties with untiring zeal, and giving up many of the social enjoyments of home, have been grieved to hear individuals, who cannot appreciate their motives, or look forward to the end, ask the question, "How much pay do these teachers receive?"

P.

CATSKILL, N. Y.

We have just received the report of this auxiliary, and extract a few sentences, which we feel persuaded

will be read with interest. The school has 228—average attendance 160. There are two classes of coloured scholars, one of which is taught by a coloured female, who has been a member of the school about 8 years.

The plan of limited lessons, for the larger classes has been generally practised. The catalogue of our library contains about 540 volumes. The teachers' monthly concert has been regularly attended. We think our Sabbath-school has been as interesting, during the past year, as in any former year. Although it has not been our lot to witness any special religious excitement, yet we trust there have been four or five cases of conversion to Christ; one of these persons has been a member of our school for several years, and she has now united with the church. One dear scholar, we trust, has united with the church triumphant in heaven. It may subserve the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, and be an encouragement to the friends of Sabbath-schools to persevere in their work, to mention some particulars relative to this affecting death. Although nothing had been noticed of special seriousness previous to the last sickness of this little girl, (about 11 years old,) yet it was evident that the Holy Spirit had been silently carrying on his work in her heart, as an evidence of which, two extracts from papers found by her mother after her death, are subjoined. Soon after she was taken ill, she appeared to have very enlightened views of God's holy law, and of her own condition, as a ruined sinner. Her anxiety for the salvation of her soul was very great for a short time, until she committed herself to the disposal of her dear Redeemer. From that time, she appeared to enjoy the comforts of a child of God, in an uncommon degree. Her patience, and the serenity of her mind, under very severe suffering, surprised many who visited her. Her exhortations, and affectionate messages to her mates and others, were exceedingly affecting, and no doubt, made impressions

that will long be remembered. The writer was not an eye witness in this case, being out of town at the time; but the facts are put down nearly as related to him.

The extracts following, are a simple specimen of the prevailing occupation of the thoughts of the mind of this little girl. The first is entitled, "On the Sabbath-school."—"The Sabbath-school is one of the best institutions ever established in our country. A great many persons have received their first religious impressions in the Sabbath-school. Many children have been taught to read the Bible by means of the Sabbath-school. How highly we ought to prize the privileges we enjoy in the Sabbath-school, and by other sources of improvement. We have all these privileges, while others know nothing about the true God, but worship idols made of wood and stone. Ought we not to do all in our power to send the gospel among them, that they may know the way of salvation? The first object of missionaries is, to establish Sabbath-schools. If we do not improve by it, our *doom* will be much greater than those who have not had these advantages." The other piece is entitled by her, "On Life."—"Life is very short and uncertain: if this be the case, we should spend our time to the best advantage. We should be very industrious and virtuous. We ought to be prepared for death. It is but a short time that we have to stay upon earth; and we must improve this short time to the best advantage, so that we can give a good account at the day of judgment. If we do not, we must expect the awful curse pronounced—depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

This, among the many instances of a similar character, recorded in the annals of Sabbath-school reports, is calculated to excite the most earnest efforts of christians to extend the blessed influence of this *precious* cause to the utmost bounds of the inhabited world. We say *precious*, because it is a cause which the Great Head of the church has evidently owned and blessed in a very special

manner. And again, it is precious, because it is a moral engine, which in its operation, must tear away the strong bars that separate the fold of Christ, and bring every one, of whatever name he may be called, to understand the voice of the great Shepherd alike, and co-operate to turn all the streams of christian benevolence into one channel; and those sectional prejudices, which have heretofore so contracted the minds of christians, that the world has been left to perish for the want of the bread of life, shall be swallowed up in the ocean of unalloyed philanthropy.

Respectfully, yours,

H. THAYER, *Supt.*

EXTRACT FROM THE QUARTERLY REPORT
OF THE RICHMOND SUNDAY SCHOOL,
NO. 2.

This school went into operation in April, 1817. Since that time it has passed entirely out of the hands of its original founders, with the exception of one of the teachers, who has, at this time, charge of the 1st class in the female department, and has been regular and persevering in her attention to the school since it was first instituted.

The officers of the school are a Superintendent, Secretary, two Visitors of Absentees, and a Librarian. We have on register 241 scholars. This number we believe would be considerably diminished, were the list cleared of all who have left the school. The school is divided into 13 male, and 13 female classes. About half of the classes, in each department are studying the Questions on the Selected Scripture Lessons for Sunday Schools.

A Library was established in this school and went into operation the 1st of March last. It now consists of 256 vols. During the quarter for which we are making a report, besides a large number of smaller books, not connected with the Library, 41 vols. have been read by the teachers; 237 by the male and 212 vols. by the female scholars; making 490 vols. read by teachers and scholars this quarter. A large proportion of the books have

been obtained from the Depository of the American Sunday-School Union in Philadelphia. The books obtained from this depository are found much more suitable for a Sunday-school Library than those obtained from any other source.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN N. GORDON, *Superintendent.*
Richmond, 12th Sept. 1827.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARIES.—Besides this, there are seven or eight other schools in this city—all of them we believe in a flourishing condition—and all of them collectively embracing between 1000 and 1100 scholars.

From the statement in the above report, respecting the number of volumes read by the school No. 2, in little more than three months, and from similar statements from almost every part of the union, we have the most ample proof of the utility of Sunday-school libraries. Successful experiment has fully tested the superior excellence of the new method, above that of the old "reward system" by tickets. The 490 vols. alluded to in the report, have not only been carried from the Library by the teachers and scholars—they have been read—as appears from the plan pursued by the managers, who reserve and exercise the right of requiring brief accounts of the contents of the books taken by the pupils, when they are returned.

We will follow this Report with a few remarks, for the purpose of noticing some advantages of the library system over the old method of rewarding by tickets, which is yet retained in many parts of our country.

First, The Library system secures a more punctual attendance. To promote the welfare of every school, punctual attendance is indispensable. This, in the present instance, has been more effectually secured by admitting the scholars to the use of a well selected library, than it ever has been by any other method. In the old system, the child is pleased for a time with his tickets, and with the expectation of exchanging them, when he has a sufficient number for a book. But the charm of novelty is soon lost—and the child unless he rightly estimates and really loves his lessons,

(which is not always the case) soon comes to have no better motive for attending the school, than the fear of his parent's displeasure. But the libraries afford to the scholar, that constant and unceasing variety, both of instruction and rational amusement, which constitutes the great charm of human life—particularly in our early years—and which, instead of abating his curiosity, serves rather to arouse and strengthen it.

Secondly—These Libraries make the object of Sunday-schools to appear large and consequential, and thus prompt the children to more hearty efforts. A man will never put forth his whole energies in any cause, till he is convinced the cause is a creditable one, and of importance to him in some way. Just so it is with children. They never will engage *heartily* and *perseveringly* in any enterprise, unless they can attach to it, and see others attach to it, some value—some importance. This remark leads us to inquire:—What inference will be drawn by children, when they see professors of religion wholly indifferent to Sunday-schools? We leave the inquiry for such to answer—if there are yet any such among us:—but we may rest assured that these schools will never come to exert the full extent of their intellectual and moral power—until both teachers and scholars shall be more thoroughly convinced of their importance, by seeing christians of every name deeply concerned in their prosperity.

Another benefit of Sunday-school libraries is, the *taste for reading*, which they lead children to form. In most children under 12 years old,—we find an utter aversion to reading of any kind, (we appeal to parents for the truth of this statement) an aversion which can be overcome only by frown or flatteries or bribes, on the part of parents. Now the books published by the American Sunday-School Union, of which these libraries are formed, are expressly intended for young readers. Their capacities and tastes in all the different gradations of age and intellect are carefully studied—and the books adapted accordingly in their subjects and style. Formerly little or no attention was given

to this subject, but now things have altered. Perhaps there is no characteristic of the present age, affording clearer indications of the progress of society, than the constantly growing attention, which is given to the subject of books for children.

If, therefore, we would lay the foundation for useful, intelligent and virtuous citizens—if we would “train up children in the way they should go,” let us in our Sunday-schools, in addition to the Bible, put into their hands, such books as will engage their attention and at the same time instruct them in their moral duties. And such are the books from the general Depository.

Lastly—In those parts of our country, where the population is sparse, Sunday-schools are often gotten up and carried into successful operation for one season, after which, from some inconvenience in the distance they have to go, and from having no rallying point to draw them together at the opening of the next season, the scholars suffer the school to die. We have known several instances of this. Now a library of 100 or 200 vols. costing \$15 or \$20, such as almost every neighbourhood is ready and willing to purchase, if any one would start the plan and take the trouble of it, such a library, established and enlarged from year to year, would form a common centre, in which all the children in the neighbourhood would have a common interest. It would bring them together at the commencement of each year, full of zeal and cheerfulness, more effectually than any other method.

Let the friends of Sunday-schools in any form, examine the subject and their duty in respect to it. Let all who are friends to the rising generation—to the cause of morality—all who would see the Sabbath observed and its institutions respected—all who would see the tongue of profaneness hushed—the bowl of the drunkard broken—the table of the gambler deserted—the arm of assassination and revenge palsied—let all who are interested in the progress of virtue, religion and human happiness, ask themselves what more can be done for Sabbath-schools. They will find

room for exertion. Let proper exertion be made, and we do believe, that the time will not be long, when those dwellings in our country, which are now the abodes of poverty, ignorance and misery—will be changed to scenes of industry, intelligence and happiness. When instead of seeing our youth, on the Sabbath, making to the hunting ground with their dogs and guns—we shall find them in the churches of God,

“—Heart broken worshippers,
Bowed in serious prayer.”

Vis. & Tel.

QUERY.

“*Can any thing but necessity justify teachers absenting themselves from their classes; if so, what may be considered a sufficient excuse for absence?*”

The absence of teachers from their classes, is a subject, upon the discussion of which, I enter with sorrowful reluctance, lest I should be chargeable with writing a libel on Sunday-schools, and thereby expose myself to the reproach of my esteemed fellow labourers; or lest I should by revealing such secrets concerning the inconsistency of some Sunday-school teachers, as might furnish profane persons with arguments against the influential nature of religion, and cause the enemies of Christianity, triumphantly to exclaim—“Ah! ah! so would we have it!”

The question, however, though a melancholy one, demands an answer. It implies a very serious deficiency, which I hope to be able so to charge upon the consciences of these irregular teachers, as to show them the absolute and imperious necessity of reformation in this lamentable practice; which appears to me, in most cases, to arise out of a disposition to Sunday-school delinquency, or religious vagrancy: the former indulging itself, with complacency, in a culpable neglect of duty; and the latter taking the licentious privilege of seeking gratification in other engagements, or at other places, at the very time when the persons entertaining these reprehensible dispositions, should be

employed in teaching their classes in Sunday-schools.

The principle that must be our guide in answering the present query is—*That all persons who are regular teachers, have engaged punctually and diligently to fulfil all the duties required of them, by the regulations of the Sunday-school to which they belong.* It may be also needful to add that they have entered into this engagement, *virtually* with the children; and *really* with their fellow teachers, in connexion with the sacred authority of God himself. These considerations will present to our attention, the great criminality of any dereliction from their stated employment.

Contemplating the character of the Eternal God, and the great interest that the triune Jehovah takes in the momentous concern of man's salvation, we may seriously inquire—can the Almighty Father view without much displeasure, those teachers who from indolence, carelessness, or indecision, absent themselves from the classes in which they have made the solemn engagement to instruct ignorant immortals in the way of salvation? Can the Son of God witness such proceedings without feeling the affront put upon him, by such trifling with the concerns that cost him his blood? Can the Holy Spirit impart his blessing to labours which are characterized with so much culpable neglect? If teachers be guilty of such practices, they ought, with abhorrence, to view them as treason against the Majesty of heaven; and with deep repentance forsake them without delay, lest such inconsistent actions and devious ways should provoke the Almighty to abandon them, as victims to the sad consequences of their own pernicious habits.

In reference to the manner in which the associates of these absentee teachers are affected by such disorderly conduct, I would endeavour to impress upon the minds of these delinquents three remarkable words, which may be the more easily remembered as they each begin with the same letter:—*disappointment—derangement—disunion.*

1. These absentees grievously disappoint their scholars, their fellow

teachers, and their superintendent; and when their neglect is reported at home, the parents of the children also feel that their hopes are defeated.

2. They derange the order of their classes, and render them a scene of evil, rather than good, a cause of annoyance rather than pleasure; or their pernicious examples may countenance and encourage the children in irregular attendance, and perhaps infect some of their fellow teachers with this contagious distemper.

3. They do much to destroy that union which is the bond of perfectness to the institution, by lowering themselves in the opinion of their associates, and by rendering themselves unworthy the confidence of their friends. Upon these three points much might be said, but as they will naturally suggest to the mind many serious reflections, perhaps conscience had better be left to do its own work.

The query, however, supposes that necessity may, in some cases, justify the absence of teachers from their classes. I feel quite satisfied in stating that the interests of Sunday-schools require that this necessity should be confined within very narrow limits. A class without its teacher, and the superintendent unacquainted with the reason of absence, should excite as much surprise and regret, as a pulpit without the preacher, and no one knowing the reason why he could not fulfil his engagement. All teachers should consider themselves as *shepherds*, and their classes as their *flocks*, over the spiritual concerns of which, they should diligently watch with that special care and anxious solicitude which would evince the high value they attach to the salvation of immortal souls. I therefore can only admit, that there are three sufficient grounds of excuse for the absence of teachers. The first is *personal illness*, that would unfit them for discharging their duties towards the children. The second is *family affliction*, in which their personal sympathy and attendance at home could not be dispensed with. The third is, being *unavoidably* obliged to be at some distance from home on the Sabbath day. These I

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should be willing to admit as reasonable excuses; "provided always, and be it further enacted, and with the consent of all regular Sunday-school teachers, that the three cases of absence hereby allowed to be justifiable, shall be considered as insufficient to discharge the conscience, unless the superintendent of the school be acquainted with the cause of such teacher's absence."

Let then all diligent, punctual, and persevering Sunday-school teachers who with integrity and constancy minister to the natural and spiritual wants of their scholars, address their irregular associates with much affectionate zeal in the name of the Almighty, and say, "we then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. Giving no offence in any thing," 2 Cor. vi. 1, 3. The whole chapter is very appropriate to the present subject, and deserves, yea, I may say, demands attentive perusal, and serious meditation; and happy will those be, who, from the advice and injunctions of the apostle Paul, are wise to draw answers to the present question, and prudent to avoid all inconsistency of practice: yea, thrice happy will they be, who in every case are found acting with that decision of character, which is founded on Scripture principles.—*Lon. Tea. Mag.*

For the American Sunday-School Magazine.

THE WRECK.

Port Penn, Delaware, Nov. 6, 1827.

Mr. Editor,

Some time in the early part of last winter, the schooner William Porter, from Philadelphia, bound to Richmond, was lost in our bay. Several articles of her cargo were landed here in a damaged state, and among them, a number of small books published by the American Sunday-School Union. These were soon widely circulated in this place and its neighbourhood. Almost every child who could read was busy in drying the tattered leaves, or perusing the contents of his new acquisition, and from the young they soon passed into the hands of parents and friends.

Now, sir, it would be doubtless some consolation to those who suffered the loss of the books by this shipwreck to know, even that they were eagerly read by those into whose hands they fell, but more remains untold. It was soon suggested that it was an excellent opportunity to establish a school, and accordingly one was put into operation. Another school previously existing in the vicinity, in a languishing state, was greatly revived, and may be said to date its second beginning from the foregoing circumstance. We have sent to the Depository of the Union for more books, and we fondly hope that this blessed mode of preparing the youth of our land, alike for this and a future world, will be perpetuated among us, down to the remotest generations.

Respectfully,

Your Ob. Servt.

The books to which the foregoing letter alludes, were shipped last December to supply an order from Richmond. Such as were taken from the wreck in a condition to be repacked, were returned to Philadelphia, and the claim for salvage generously relinquished, by the person who saved them. That the balance should have been instrumental in effecting so great good as is detailed in our correspondent's letter, is an event as singular as it is welcome, and we cannot but regard such a *loss* as real *gain*.

MISSIONS.

From a Sunday-school Missionary to the Corresponding Secretary, dated,

Mayville, N. Y. Nov. 6, 1827.

Dear Sir,

The rains of the last month have permitted me to establish but two town unions, and six new schools. I have obtained six subscriptions to your larger, and thirty-seven to your smaller magazine; and have travelled among the schools of Erie and Chataque counties, urging them to continue their operations in the win-

ter. Experiment has taught some of our schools, that pupils can be obtained in the coldest seasons. Why should children who crowd their daily schools, and sport in the snows of winter, be debarred from the Sunday-school, when the bleakness of creation might invite even a truant to spend his long evenings in study? No *natural* obstacle, but the indifference of parents and teachers, is presented to winter Sunday-schools.

VISIT TO TONNAWANDA MISSION STATION, N. Y.

On the border of the meandering Tonawanda, stands an humble log house, known to the Senecas as the residence of their devoted missionary. Near it is their school house, which defies the charge of extravagance; for though not more than sixteen feet square, the rays of light intrude through more than twenty places. Mr. and Mrs. Bingham are Baptists. Limited means of support, and the opposition of the Pagans, strengthened by some white men, (who would rather see them dance around the two white dogs, which they annually sacrifice, than worshipping Jesus Christ,) make the school small. An interesting pupil about twelve years old, wrote me the following note:

"I like to go to *Sunday-school* to hear about Jesus Christ, how he suffered and died for our sins, and that shows that we are sinners. Sometimes I think I have sinned too much against God, but I put my whole trust in him, in that blessed Saviour. We ought to come to Christ, and say to him, God be merciful to me, for I am a sinner. God knows it if I tell a lie, or wicked word he hears it. I should be very sorry if my heart should not be renewed by the Holy Spirit, before I die."

Another wrote—"Christ can only forgive our sins. I love to go to school—read the word of God. Sometimes I go alone. Try to pray to God that he would forgive my sins. I love to go to meeting, hear preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I feel sometimes that I should die without hope of Christ."

BRUCE.

A DAY AT SENECA.

This station is four miles from Buffalo, and is superintended by Rev. T. N. Harris. The benevolent devoted spirit of the mission family, consisting of seven members, the native church, to which ten persons have just been added, and the interesting school, endears this place to me beyond any other in the west.

The sound of the mission bell hailing the first rays which the sun throws upon the surrounding forests, assembles the youthful band to unite with their teachers in giving thanks to him, who only makes them to dwell in safety. Arising from their knees, in a solemn manner, they all at the same time repeat the prayer of our blessed Lord. Breakfast is immediately prepared, after which they engage in useful work or healthful play, till nine o'clock, when the bell summons them to their school room. Prayer is offered by their teacher, after which they spell, read, write, and recite geography, English grammar, &c. till noon, when they dine, and play till two o'clock. Then they again assemble for prayer, and study till five. At the close of the school a portion of Scripture is read, and prayer offered by the teacher. Before leaving the room, each receives a piece of bread, his sufficient and only supper. Before nine, all assemble as in the morning for worship. The teachers then accompany them to their sleeping apartments, and hear a simultaneous "*good night*" from five and twenty voices. The present number of pupils is about fifty. It is pleasing to see how they occupy their leisure hours, in studying their selected Sunday-school lessons. Upon one of these lessons I heard them examined, and every question was answered correctly. One number of the "*Youth's Friend*" having found its way to this station, so pleased an Indian boy, that he put into my hand two shillings, saying, "Please send me the *Youth's Friend*." BRUCE.

RENSSELAER COUNTY, N. Y.

The Sunday-schools attached to the Rensselaer County Sunday-School

Union, were assembled on Sunday, 26th of August, when the following report was read, after which they were addressed by the Rev. Dr. Rice of Virginia.—Annexed is our annual report.

The Board of Managers of the Rensselaer County Sunday-School Union, in presenting their annual report, feel it their duty and privilege to express their gratitude to Almighty God, for his mercy bestowed on them, and the schools connected with the Union the past year; and while they remember the precious words of our blessed Saviour, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," they will not cease to excite themselves, or to exhort others to engage in the instruction of children, in this blessed institution, which we think, of all others, is the best calculated to lead them to an acquaintance with the glorious character and perfections of God—to a knowledge of themselves; and of Jesus Christ, whom to know aright is life eternal!

With these remarks, they will proceed to detail the proceedings of the schools attached to the Union, as far as reports have been received.

The managers of the Baptist school report, that the school is conducted by one superintendent, six male, and nine female teachers; total number of scholars is 130, average attendance is fifty-two; there has been recited during the past year 45,092 verses of Scripture; 2051 verses of hymns; 4875 answers to superintendent and teachers on the Scriptures; 208 texts from which sermons have been preached, have been recited. During the past year, 4 teachers and one scholar have made a public profession of religion; the school is in good condition; the managers and teachers are encouraged to persevere, with a firm hope, that the school will be more extensively useful the ensuing year.

The school taught in the session house attached to the Presbyterian church is conducted by 4 managers, 8 male, and 12 female teachers. The number of scholars enrolled the past year is 120, the greatest number that has attended at any one time, has

been 101; there have been organized in this school 2 male and 2 female Bible classes; the classes of boys have answered 5801 questions on the Scriptures which they have studied as lessons; the questions by the females not being noted cannot be numbered in this report, but their attendance and progress have been such as to encourage the hearts of managers and teachers. The secretary of this school being absent, the managers cannot report the recitations, nor do they consider it very important, as they hold out no inducement to the scholars to commit large lessons. A small library has been attached to this school, for the use of the scholars, which the managers hope to increase as the means are afforded them: believing that it will be an essential benefit to the school.

The school at Albia in the 5th ward of the city, is conducted by 5 managers, 9 male and 11 female teachers, the whole number of scholars is 109, average attendance is from 60 to 70; no record has been kept of recitations. The school is interesting; scholars very attentive, and a moral change in the character of the youth is evident since the commencement of this school, which is situated at the cotton and woollen factories, and embraces the children employed in these establishments. The managers of the Presbyterian school in the fourth ward, while making their report of the present state of the school, not only desire to feel, but also to express their sincere and heart-felt gratitude to Almighty God, for the preservation of their lives, and the lives of all the scholars, except one; and discovering the increase in numbers, as well as all the different interests and concerns of the school, we raise our hearts in praise to God, who has been pleased to bless the labours of the managers and teachers, and given this expression of his favour. The school is conducted by 3 managers and 9 teachers; 50 scholars average attendance; greatest number of scholars at one time is 97; 23,553 questions have been answered by the Bible classes, from M'Dowell's questions from the Scriptures; 21,488

verses of Scripture have been recited. God has been pleased to visit some of the members of this school with the convicting and converting influences of his Holy Spirit, and one of the teachers and two of scholars have become, as we hope, the subjects of his power and grace. The state of the school is encouraging, and requires only, that all who engage in this blessed work, should be faithful, prayerful, and diligent, and a precious blessing will follow. We mourn the want of a number more untiring and constant attending teachers, especially females. The managers of the school for coloured persons report, that the school is conducted by 5 managers, 2 male, and 8 female teachers; average attendance of scholars since May last has been 35; those who have attended punctually have made good progress, and two of the teachers and four of the scholars have made a public profession of religion during the past year. Since the commencement of this school in 1816, it has at no time in the pleasant season of the year, been so small as the present season. While the managers would bless God for his smiles on their endeavours to give instruction to this interesting portion of our fellow beings, they feel constrained to call on all who love the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the souls of their fellow immortals, to unite their exertions in this labour of love: we do not ask all to become managers or teachers, but this people must be persuaded and encouraged to come to the school, by those who know and feel its importance. The coloured population of our city is between 4 and 500, and is increasing. Brethren, let us see to it that the blood of this people be not found in our skirts.

P. S. REDFIELD, Sec.

Troy, Aug. 26, 1827.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA S. S. UNION.

Mr. Editor.

I have been myself so much gratified with the circumstances connected with the quarterly meeting of the schools composing the Central Union

of the District of Columbia, that I have taken the liberty to give them to you in detail, leaving it entirely to your discretion, whether the account may be advantageously placed on the pages of your most excellent Magazine. Sure I am that the meeting alluded to, has produced a very awakening effect, and that by it the interests of Sunday-schools in this section of the country, have been very materially advanced.

The meeting took place on the afternoon of the first Sabbath in the month of November, in St. John's Church, which is under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Hawley, and it was considered providential that it occurred at the time just after a meeting of the Education Society, belonging to the Episcopal Church, and which was attended, as I understand, by an unusually large body of the clergy of that church, from different sections of the country. This enabled the committee of arrangements to avail themselves of the services of several ministers of the gospel from distant parts,—a circumstance naturally calculated to add to the interest of the occasion. After singing and prayer, the children were addressed by the Rev. Mr. Bedell, of Philadelphia, in a very appropriate, and to us an entirely novel manner. His text was from the words, "And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind," &c. After a few introductory observations, he broke the ordinary method of pulpit address, and asked the children some questions connected with the subject on which he was speaking. As this was the first time the children had been so addressed, it seemed to excite their surprise, and they were backward in answering,—very few seemed to be willing to trust themselves—but after a few minutes this reserve, in some degree, wore off, and ere the discourse was concluded, there were many who raised their little voices in answer to the inquiries of the speaker. It was astonishing to notice the interest excited both among the children and in the promiscuous congregation, and I am

fully persuaded that if this plan could be judiciously adopted, so as not to make too many questions, there is nothing so well calculated to awaken and to keep up the attention of the children. There is one difficulty in this method which I think may arise, when it is attempted by those who are unaccustomed to speaking to children, and who have not a perfect command, as well over themselves as the subject. And that is—there may be too many questions asked, so that the discourse may degenerate into little better than an ordinary scriptural examination. I noticed that Mr. Bedell did not put many questions, but only threw them in here and there, and in a way which at once drew the eyes of the children on him and arrested their immediate attention. The effect was highly interesting.

After this sermon to the children, which was only about 20 minutes in length, the parents and teachers were addressed by the Rev. Dr. Milnor, of New York. It is impossible for me to do justice to this admirable address, and to the dignified and affectionate manner in which it was delivered. It was a full and complete elucidation of the benefits of Sunday-school instruction, and a warm and cheering exhortation to the teachers and superintendents. After the address of Dr. Milnor, which occupied half an hour, the Rev. Mr. Allen, of Philadelphia, made a general and excellent address to the congregation at large; and the whole was closed by the benediction.

The exercises occupied more than two hours, and were attended to with the most profound and gratified attention. The church was crowded to excess, and I trust that not an individual went away, but with more enlarged views of the benefits of Sabbath-schools, and a more determined resolution to advance the interests of this heaven born charity. I noticed with pleasure among the attendants, the President of the United States, Major General Brown, and many of the most distinguished inhabitants of Washington.

I trust that the gentlemen whose names I have taken the liberty to

mention, will not be offended—they could not but be gratified, if they were fully aware of the pleasure they gave, and of the good of which they were instrumental.

I remain, my dear sir, yours, T.

UNION COUNTY, PA.

Our school is at present flourishing. Children appear anxious to learn; and teachers are willing to devote their time in teaching them. We have adopted the receiving and minute book, as published by the Union. The old mode of rewarding the children for what they have committed, is still continued. We trust that the Lord has been in our midst last winter; and that some drops of mercy have fallen on this dreary wilderness of sin; and some few have been brought out of nature's darkness into God's marvellous light. Ten or twelve have been brought to indulge a hope. Of this number, some were engaged in the Sabbath-school. One male, since his connexion with the school, has experienced a change; and three have since their connexion attached themselves to the school, and are actively engaged. So that we have great reason to be thankful for what the Lord has done for us. At the commencement of the last year, there were no pious teachers attached to the school; but now we have five, who are interested in its welfare. One scholar has, I trust, been brought to ground the weapons of his rebellion, and return in the exercise of love, repentance, and faith, and gives evidence that he is sincere. During the excitement a number of the children were deeply exercised. Some we thought were in earnest in escaping from Sodom; but time has since taught us, that their spiritual concern were as the "morning cloud and the early dew."

At present there are few of the female teachers under conviction for sin; and we hope that their convictions may increase, until they have complied with the humiliating conditions of the gospel, and found peace in the wounds of a crucified Redeemer.

Extract of a letter received from a Lady in North Carolina, dated at

Raleigh, Sept. 20th, 1827.

You will be pleased to hear that the interest in the Sunday-school cause here, is becoming general. The exertions of a zealous minister of the Methodist church, have been much blessed. There are now schools attached to the four different churches in this place, and besides these, there is a large school, under the instruction of coloured teachers, consisting of nearly 100 scholars, and in which the Lord appears to be pouring out his Spirit. One of the teachers, who is a coloured preacher of undoubted piety, told me that thirteen had recently professed religion, and that such was the general solicitude among the scholars to know what they should do to be saved, that he had suspended the exercises of school to engage in prayer for inquiring souls. The excitement among the coloured population is general, and many have been added to the churches.

Several ministers of the gospel are engaged as superintendents, and as active promoters of the schools: in other respects, numbers led on by their example, feel it their duty to enlist as teachers; and whilst ministers and people are thus zealously engaged in behalf of the youth, the effect upon them is salutary; they are induced to attach a greater importance to their instructions, and to attend in greater numbers and with more punctuality than heretofore.

The Union prayer meeting is observed; it is well attended, and has thus far been very interesting. May Heaven abundantly crown the efforts of all who are engaged in promoting the best interests of the rising generation, by aiding the cause of Sabbath-schools.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

How to commence.—In my tour through the country, I find, in some places, schools already in successful operation; but in many other places, in my inquiries and conversation on this subject, both with preachers and people, I frequently meet with this

question, "How shall we make a beginning?" In reply, I would say, that although the committee have not yet matured a plan for general use, yet directions may be given as to some preparatory measures, which may have an important bearing on the future prosperity of the schools.

The conference has made it the duty of the preachers to use their influence to have Sabbath-school societies formed in every place where it is practicable. This is a very important step to be taken, and is undoubtedly the best method for placing the schools on a permanent foundation; and for securing funds, which, though small, are necessary. In forming these societies, let public notice be given, and let exertions be made to enlist as many of our members and friends as possible, in order that the expense may be more easily met, and that the schools may enjoy the benefit of their influence. In selecting the board of officers and managers, sound piety, influence in the community, and interestedness in the cause of religion in general, and of Sabbath-schools in particular, should be considered as the requisite qualifications. Let the official board appoint the superintendents and teachers, and procure such books as may be found necessary and proper for the use of the schools, and make every necessary preparation to commence the schools in the early part of the following summer. In Zion's Herald of July 11th, will be found the form of a constitution for branch societies, the general principles of which should be recognized, if we would preserve a uniformity in our operations, and prevent confusion in our annual reports. In many places, however, where our societies are small, and on account of unavoidable circumstances, it will be found to be extremely difficult to form a Sabbath-school society. In such cases I would recommend to pious individuals who may feel interested in this business, that they collect the children of the neighbourhood, and, according to their means, give them such religious instruction as will be interesting and useful; remembering, that in this way, many of our best Sabbath-schools

had their beginning. "Cast thy bread upon the water, and thou shalt find it again after many days." And if the preachers in such cases would form our young members into Bible classes, they would soon prepare the way for Sabbath-schools in many places, where, perhaps, otherwise, they would not be able to collect one.

Superintendents.—The success of a Sabbath-school very much depends on the selection of the superintendent, and on the proper discharge of his duty. This officer stands in a highly responsible relation to the school, to the church, and to the world. In selecting him, we would seek for intelligence, piety, activity, prudence, and for winning and conciliatory manners. He should be a man of prayer; of holy life and conversation; a man in whom the community have confidence, and who is ardently devoted to the cause of Sabbath-schools. It is his duty to see that every meeting of the school be opened and closed with singing or prayer, or both; and to be to the teachers and scholars an example of **PUNCTUALITY**. He must observe closely the conduct of the children, and their progress; and see that the doings of the school are faithfully recorded, and report the same to the official board. He must see that the exercises be neither too short, for any useful purpose, nor so long as to weary the children, or incommode the families to which they respectively belong; that in the instructions, the great, the interesting, the important truths of Christianity be kept in view, and referred to; in short, he should hold himself responsible to do his utmost to impress religious truth on the minds of both teachers and scholars, and exert all his influence to give to the school a *decidedly Christian character*.

Teachers.—"In the selection of teachers, *consistent piety* should be the first qualification. Every grain of influence which *true piety* casts into the school, is of inconceivable value. It is exceedingly desirable that Christians of an *older* class should engage in the work. When a sufficient number, who have the important requisite above named, cannot be

found, the society should feel itself under obligation to the sober-minded and well disposed friends of Sabbath-schools, who are willing to encounter the sacrifices and self-denials of the teacher's office. It is a lamentable truth, that *the professed love of Christ* sometimes fails to constrain persons to a service, which is cheerfully performed by others from a less powerful motive." It is presumed, however, that by the blessing of God, in the organization of Bible classes, under the immediate superintendency of the preachers, our church will soon be furnished with an efficient remedy against any deficiency, for which we may have suffered in time past, relative to Sabbath-school teachers. And here let me say, that the operations now going on in the churches, are not only delightfully ominous, but to the youthful professors, exceedingly propitious. If the love of God dwelleth in them; if they have indeed a desire to be good and to do good; here then, in Sabbath-schools, a door is opened, an opportunity is presented; and that too, under precisely such circumstances, as to leave them almost, if not altogether, without excuse, should they neglect it. Although we want in our Sabbath-schools, teachers who are deeply pious and interested, and who will diffuse around them a general spirit of piety and disinterestedness; yet extraordinary talents are not necessary. Here is an opportunity for us to be, perhaps, extensively useful, though possessed of only common advantages. It is desirable indeed that our young friends engage in this pleasant work; that they do it voluntarily, cheerfully, and from conviction; and with the understanding, that though this task be performed gratuitously, that consideration by no means weakens the obligations to faithfulness; and, at the same time, prevents none of that pleasurable satisfaction which always attends a consciousness of having done our duty.

The office of teacher is, nevertheless, important; and he who teaches others in the things of religion is highly responsible. The business of the teacher is not merely to hear the children recite what they have com-

mitted; the duty of the teacher extends far beyond that—he must keep in view the object contemplated. And in order to accomplish this, the scholar must be made to understand his lesson; at least, so far as his capacity will admit. Then we are prepared to make a moral use and application of it, and can confidently ask for the divine blessing on our labours. It is much to be regretted that so much time has been spent in hearing children repeat hundreds and thousands of verses of Scripture and hymns, rather than in endeavouring to explain to them the great and important truths of which they have been speaking. If children are only taught to repeat what they do not understand, have we not some reason to fear that the careless and unmeaning familiarity with which they run through the sacred lessons, may be productive of very unfavourable consequences? And is it not vastly more important that a scholar should understand his lesson, than that he should be able to repeat it? Certainly he cannot be said to have learned his lesson, when he can only repeat the words it contains, in the order in which they stand, without any concern to "know the sense they mean." Sabbath-school teachers should, in all their conduct towards their scholars, endeavour to be those happy characters which "allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way." And it is to be hoped, that the pleasing reflection, that they may, at the expense of a little personal inconvenience, contribute to the good of the rising generation, will be to them a source of personal enjoyment, and a sufficient inducement for them to lend us their aid without weariness or fainting.

D. DORCHESTER.

Danville, Vt. Sep. 3, 1827.

Zion's Herald.

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS IN WINTER.

While on a journey in 1826, I was providentially led to spend a Sabbath in a populous and beautiful village in New England. It was October. The weather was mild, the roads were dry and pleasant. On Sabbath morn-

ing, I called on the clergyman of the place, and inquired for the Sunday-school. He said they had a very flourishing school, but it was not then in operation. I asked him the reason. He said the school was discontinued for the winter season. I expressed my surprise, and begged he would inform me why it was necessary to discontinue a school in so populous a village. "Ah," said he, "there are many *difficulties* to struggle with that you know nothing of." I asked him to name some of the difficulties. He hesitated, and after torturing his memory a minute or two, replied: "In the first place, *it is not the fashion* to keep the school in operation during the winter." I told him I would not trouble him for any more reasons, but undertook to show him the importance and practicability of the measure. He finally gave a finishing argument to his side of the question, by saying, "Young man, when you have lived a few years longer, you will know more than you do now."

This last saying of his was very true; after spending another twelve month on the earth, I find many things added to my little stock of knowledge. One important item of knowledge is this, "that Sunday-schools can be kept in operation, in Vermont, during the whole year." Last season I *believed* it, now I *know* it; because in several cases it has been *proved*; witness Vergennes, New-Haven and Montpelier, and several other places. The fact is, the winter is the best season for study, and the best season for Sunday-schools. The only difficulty is the coldness of the weather. This difficulty can be overcome. If we should yield to this difficulty in *all* cases, we should be very liable to lose much of our time, and perhaps a meal of victuals now and then; for every Vermonter knows how difficult it is to get out of a warm bed on a morning of January in season for breakfast. Yet, as it is the *fashion* to rise before breakfast, we find that a great majority of our race overcome the difficulty, and secure their share of food for the body.

If the frail body needs nourishment
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during winter, certainly the soul needs spiritual food during the same season; and if all men are willing to endure fatigue and cold for the former, let no Christians be remiss in securing the bread of life for themselves and their children. Salvation,—the salvation of immortal souls is the great object of Sunday-school instruction—an object of more importance than the liberation of an empire from tyrannical oppression. If these schools are of such vast importance, shall they be relinquished during one half of the year, and for no other reason, than that the weather is cold? No, there is surely an awakening spirit in Vermont, and the coming winter will exhibit many schools, in constant and active operation. Oh, may the Lord smile on the efforts of his people, and bring thousands of the rising race to rejoice in the hope of his glory.—*Vermont W. & State Gazette.*

WINTER SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

From the speech of the Rev. J. FISK, of Monkton, at the late anniversary of the Vermont Sunday-School Union.

— But I hear another say, *The winter days are so cold and short, that children cannot be collected without much difficulty, and great inconvenience.* Inconvenience! What matter of importance was ever accomplished without some inconvenience? Do not parents sometimes find it inconvenient to feed and clothe their children? Did not Paul meet with some difficulties and some inconveniences in carrying the gospel to the heathen? If the Missionaries of the present day should cease their operations because of difficulties, when would the gospel be published to all the nations of the earth?

But what are these difficulties so insurmountable that Sabbath-schools must be discontinued through the winter? Do I still hear the objection of cold and short days?—Oh! that I could now present before your eyes boys of the age of 8 and 10 years, who not one hundred miles from this, stemmed the drifting snows, and faced the chilling blasts of last winter, for

2 or 3 miles, because they loved the Sabbath-school, and would not be persuaded to leave their seats vacant. I could point you to one of them, who instead of being discouraged by buffeting the howling storm one day, rose early the next morning and travelled almost a mile through the snow drifts, for the purpose of engaging another boy to become a member of the school. Or I could tell you of another boy, whose parents were too poor to provide him with shoes, who was found by his teacher on one snowy Sabbath in autumn, sewing old rags upon his feet, "because," said he, with tears in his eyes, "I cannot stay away from the Sabbath-school."

The experiment has been tried and proved far more successful, than the most fond wishes could have anticipated. I know a minister in this State, who has testified that soon after the commencement of his school last fall, his audience was increased more than one-third, and that during all the cold and stormy Sabbaths of last winter, he could look around his meeting house at noon, and behold 100 or 150 youth and children attending to the blessed instruction of the Bible. This was in a farming town, where some parents had to bring their children four or five miles. —*Vermont Chron.*

REMARKS ON THE BEST MEANS OF PROMOTING A SABBATH-SCHOOL.

On the *usefulness* of Sabbath-schools, it is not necessary that much should be said. The religious papers in circulation are constantly furnishing us with evidence the most satisfactory upon this point.

With regard to the *best measures* for promoting Sunday-schools, I am aware that there are different opinions, and it is not without some hesitation that the following thoughts are submitted to the public. It will be my aim to suggest nothing as the result of speculation merely, but such rules and regulations as in one fair and successful experiment at least, have been found to exert an important influence.

In order that a Sunday-school may

flourish, it must be made a subject of prayer. Without this, the best regulations and the most arduous labours, will accomplish but little. The youth, whose benefit we seek in all that is done in the Sunday-school, will never be persuaded to believe that their attention to the objects it proposes is important, unless they can often hear solemn and earnest prayers in its behalf. As they naturally dislike subjects of a serious character, if it be not a subject of prayer they will view it as they do many other things, as an invention of the religious world, that is rendered interesting, only by being fashionable. In the domestic circle, in the conference room, in the meeting for prayer, and in the solemn assembly upon the Sabbath, they should be accustomed to hear distinct and ardent petitions for the Sunday-school. This practice will tend also to promote an interest in the minds of its teachers, which is essential to its prosperity. Unless the teachers view it as an object sufficiently important to employ many of their thoughts and their prayers, as well as their punctual attendance, but little can be expected from their services. But the most important reason why it should be made the subject of prayer, it hardly need be mentioned, is, that it may have the blessing of God. I have often been surprised to hear Christians who have been labouring for months to promote a Sunday-school with little or no success, make not the slightest mention of it in any of their public prayers. On what should we pray for a divine blessing, if not upon that instruction, which is drawn from the treasury of divine means and measures, and committed to our children in the morning of their lives? Let then the name of the Sunday-school be inscribed on every cloud of incense, that passes from earth to heaven.

The Sunday-school, where practicable, should be conducted by *pious young people*. Some things have already appeared in the public papers—perhaps enough—on the importance of having, where they can be obtained, pious superintendents and teachers. If such however cannot

be obtained, such as are moral, intelligent, and otherwise qualified, ought undoubtedly to be employed, rather than suffer the school to fail. With regard to the *age* suitable for the conductors of Sunday-schools, I am inclined to think many have misjudged. They have thought that experience and stability were traits of character for this service, more important than any that are peculiar to youth. It is however found to be a fact, that young men, especially when pious, enter into this service with a zeal and an ardour of feeling, which we rarely see in such as are advanced in life. Besides, though it may be difficult to point out the cause, it is found to be a fact, that the same things, when said to children by such as are near their own age, will be better received, and are more likely to produce effect, than if exhibited by such as are advanced in life. If such, however, as are young cannot be obtained and others can, by all means let them be employed.

It is important to have teachers that are intelligent and communicative; such as will be ready to suggest a multitude of questions on the lessons, or the passages that are adduced by the scholar, to learn whether he understands them. Barely to recite a lesson without being interrogated, soon becomes a dull, uninteresting ceremony. It is important also, that superintendents should furnish themselves with illustrations of the most easy and familiar kind; such as Cecil's in explaining to his child the nature of faith. But on this point, and on the importance of a *Library*, I have not room in this paper to remark.—*Ibid.*

SABBATH-SCHOOL IN A STATE PRISON.

From the Cayuga county Sabbath-school Report, August 3, 1827.

Mr. B. C. Smith, the superintendent of the Sabbath-school in the Auburn State Prison, has made a report to this Board, which we present, in the hope that it will have a salutary influence. It is as follows;—

"This school, as is perhaps pretty generally known, was commenced in

the spring of 1826, at the suggestion of the agent and chaplain of the prison, with the benevolent design of effecting, by a superadded moral influence, what the ordinary prison discipline too often fails of producing—a radical reformation in the convicts. For the first few months, about fifty only were brought under instruction, as a mere experiment. But it succeeded so well,—promised to exert so powerful and salutary an influence upon those wretched outcasts from society,—that in the fall it was thought advisable to enlarge the school. Accordingly, during the past year, the average number has been about one hundred, selected from among the younger and more ignorant of the convicts. These are divided into twenty classes, which are under the instruction of as many students from the theological seminary.

"In speaking of the progress of the school the past year, it is not enough to say that our highest expectations are realized—they are greatly exceeded. In the case of these convicts, we found fresh testimony to the truth of the common remark, that ignorance and vice are closely allied. By far the greater number of those received into the school have been found incapable of reading intelligibly in common readings, and not a few unable to tell one letter from another. They have, however, uniformly manifested the most intense interest in the instructions of their teachers, and applied themselves with such diligence to their lessons, as to exhibit an improvement, in general highly gratifying, and in some instances almost incredible. Few can now be found in the school, if we except those recently brought in, who cannot read in the New Testament, with a good degree of accuracy and readiness. And never did beings express more gratitude for their privileges, or manifest a deeper sense of obligation than they do to their instructors.

"Did the limits of this notice admit of it, many anecdotes might be related that would be interesting, as illustrative of the happy influence of intellectual and moral culture bestowed upon even the most abandon-

ed. A single fact may be mentioned, which will show what use some of the convicts, at least, make of their Bibles, and how important it is that they have them in their hands, and are able to read them. A teacher, having listened to the recitation of one of his class as long as he thought the time would allow, asked him how much more he had to recite, and was answered, "*I believe I can say thirty or forty chapters!*" This, too, was one, who, when he first entered the school, could scarcely spell out a verse. Let it not be supposed, however, that this is given as the most striking proof we have of the utility of the school. A mass of facts might be presented far more decisive.

"Who, that looks upon ignorance as the mother of crime, and regards intellectual light as essential to the virtue and happiness of a community, will not be glad that even one ray is thrown into this dark and 'frightful wilderness of mind?'—who, especially, that acknowledges the efficacy of the 'sword of the Spirit,' will not rejoice in view of what the 'word of God,' thus treasured in their memories, may be the means of accomplishing? Nor does all our joy lie in the prospect. We think that what we have already witnessed of the transforming power of the gospel upon some of their obdurate hearts, demands our most devout thanksgivings to God. Here, however, we would speak with diffidence; for we are aware that the marks of Christian character may be feigned so as to deceive, even the most discriminating, and that these men have peculiar temptations to it. We know, moreover, that deceptions of this sort have actually been attempted, manifestly with the design of enlisting our sympathies. We can, however, say no less than this, that a *number*, after undergoing the closest scrutiny, exhibit marks so decisive of true penitence and a radical change of heart, that, were they outside of those walls, we could not entertain a suspicion against the sincerity of their piety—nor can we doubt, that, if ever the doors of their prison are thrown open to them, they will go out, not as a curse, but as a blessing to society."

For the Sunday-School Magazine.

THE OPPORTUNITY IMPROVED.

At an association of respectable gentlemen, in one of our southern states, the last spring, a distinguished clergyman took advantage of the favourable occasion to explain the character and happy influence of Sabbath-schools. He found attentive listeners, but had no reason to suppose his arguments had done more than gained for the cause he espoused, the general good will of an influential audience.

There was one gentleman, however, upon whom the subject fastened with no ordinary interest. Although the system was almost a novelty within the range of his own experience, its excellence was so apparent, and its peculiar adaptation to the condition of society so happy and striking, that he resolved to defer the commencement of a plan so benevolent, only until he could provide the means of successful accomplishment. When the heart is engaged, execution waits quickly on resolves. The next rising sun saw him on his way to the nearest Depository of the American Sunday-School Union, about 40 miles distant, and having provided the proper requisites for a school, he soon found children willing to be instructed, and qualified assistants to aid him in teaching. Eighty regular attendants were soon enrolled, and the school gives every promise of great and matured usefulness. The founder continues to act as superintendent and teacher, and although residing at the distance of ten miles from the place of meeting, is seldom absent from his charge. He is a gentleman high in rank and office, and well qualified to discharge the duties of the important civil trusts he sustains; but it may be doubted, whether in after years, his memory will not gather its purest lustre from his having been the first to attract the attention of the citizens of B—, to that lowly, but noble institution, the SUNDAY-SCHOOL. **

DIRECTIONS FOR CONDUCTING SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

It is no easy task to give written directions which will be adapted to

the various circumstances and characters of Sunday-schools. For those who wish information on the subject, we give the following sketch of a school whose management and success have come under our personal observation.—*Western Recorder*.

The Successful Sunday-School.

In the village of —, there is a large school which has been in operation several years. Its success has been very great. Among its scholars are enrolled the children of the rich and the poor.—Since its commencement, a large number of the teachers and scholars have become hopefully the true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many who were once scholars, are now active and efficient teachers. The school receives no opposition, and no want of teachers. The scholars are very punctual in their attendance, and have contracted an ardent attachment to their teachers and to one another. Parents visit the school often, and cheerfully aid it with their money and friendly counsel.

Question.—What strange management has been used to produce such results?

No strange management at all: *simplicity of system* is the great secret. At, or before the appointed hour, the superintendent rings a bell, and the school is opened with singing and a short prayer. After this, the teachers immediately proceed to hear their classes on the lesson which has been assigned on the Sabbath previous. This lesson is short, seldom over fifteen verses, and all the classes have the same lesson assigned them.—Each teacher questions his class, at the same time giving familiar instruction on the meaning of the *words* in the lessons. This tends to interest the scholars, and excite a spirit of inquiry in their young minds respecting the truths of the Scriptures.

When a sufficient time has been spent by the teachers with their classes, the superintendent calls the attention of the school, and proceeds to examine the whole school on the lesson of the day. His questions are plain, and interspersed with explana-

tions, anecdotes, and illustrations of the passages recited. He also, sometimes, drops a few words of exhortation to the scholars, on the importance of the lessons which they are learning. He considers the salvation of their souls as the grand object for which they are assembled, and often talks to them about the miseries of hell and the joys of heaven. He points them to the Bible, which warns them to escape the one, and secure the other. After the questions and remarks of the superintendent, the school is usually closed by prayer.

Connected with the school is a large library of *small* books. The parents of the children seem deeply interested in perusing these books during the week.

If any of the teachers are absent, the superintendent calls on them, as soon as convenient, to ascertain the reason of their absence.

The teachers meet once each week, for the purpose of familiar conversation respecting the lesson for the succeeding Sabbath, and for mutual prayer for a divine blessing on their labours.

Such is a brief outline of the system of instruction pursued in *one* school, which has enjoyed blessings from heaven, and which has been instrumental in distributing invaluable blessings to hundreds of our fellow creatures.

We recommend this course of instruction wherever it can be carried into operation; and it can be carried into operation wherever the superintendent and teachers are disposed to do it.

There are two points with regard to the system of instruction, which we consider as very essential. These are, 1. That the lessons be *short*, from ten to twenty verses, and the whole have *one* lesson each Sabbath. 2. That the superintendent examine the whole school on this lesson each Sabbath. There are many strong arguments in favour of this system, which cannot now be considered for want of room. The following are some of the most prominent:—

1. The mind of the scholar is directed to the particular truths of the lesson.

2. His judgment, as well as his memory, is exercised.

3. A spirit of inquiry and investigation is excited in the youthful mind.

4. The attention of the whole class is secured at the same time—an acquisition which removes all necessity for discipline.

5. All the scholars enjoy equal advantages.

6. The teachers themselves are highly interested and instructed.

7. The attention of families is excited to search the Scriptures.

8. The good effects are permanent.

9. Those scholars who cannot read the Bible, are greatly benefited by hearing the other scholars answer the questions of the superintendent.

A BACKSLIDER AWAKENED IN CONSEQUENCE OF RECEIVING A VISIT FROM SOME FRIENDS OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

Mr. Editor,

A few years since, I spent a short time with a friend, in behalf of Sunday-schools, in a neighbouring state. On our return one evening, just as the sun was setting, our attention was arrested by the sight of a little cottage, at some distance from the road, which we had passed in the morning, under the impression, that the man was violently opposed to Sunday-schools. We deliberated for a moment, and resolved to visit the family, trusting in God for success. With these impressions we entered the house. The man was in the field. At our request, however, he came in, and received us with much apparent kindness. We made known to him our object; and he, to our surprise, highly approved of it. He said that he had children,—should be glad to have them attend the Sunday-school, —but observed, that he was poor, and had not been able to furnish them with suitable clothes.

We offered him our aid, which he received with suitable expressions of gratitude. Unwilling to leave the house without imparting to him a word of admonition, we asked him his

views of personal religion, as an indispensable qualification for admittance to heaven. In reply, he gave us the following account of himself. "A few years ago, as I then hoped, I experienced religion. I immediately commenced family worship;—took great delight in reading the Bible;—was happy in the company of Christians;—and found the highest enjoyment in attending upon all the ordinances of religion. For about three years, I enjoyed, almost without intermission, delightful communion with God. About this time, I was called in the providence of God, to leave this happy society, for a place where I enjoyed but few religious privileges. In this place, with little religious company, deprived of conference and prayer meetings, and usually, of the public ordinances of religion on the Sabbath, my zeal abated, my love grew cold, and I now commenced my awful downward course. The duties of religion became wearisome. I began, occasionally, to omit returning thanks at my table. Conscience accused me: but still I persevered, and at length gave up this part of the exercise entirely. I now, sometimes, omitted to ask a blessing on my food. The habit grew upon me; the exercise became a burden; and by degrees, I relinquished all religious duties at my table. I had, by this time, lost my relish for all the services of religion in my family; I mourned over my fallen condition, my conscience accused me, but still I could not resolve to return. As I took no delight in family prayer, I began occasionally to omit it in the evening; and satisfied my conscience with the excuse, that I was too much wearied with the labours of the day, to perform the duty acceptably. In opposition to what I knew to be right, I continued to omit prayer in the evening—at length, omitted it sometimes in the morning,—and thus, by degrees, I relinquished family worship entirely, except on the Sabbath. I lived awhile in this condition—was extremely unhappy—concluded I had no religion: and at last I gave up entirely all religious duties in my family. But during this whole period I con-

stantly maintained secret prayer! though with little satisfaction.

Shortly after this I was visited with a severe fit of sickness, and brought to the borders of eternity. My reason was not impaired; conscience awoke:—the sins of my life rose before me in awful array—I lamented my folly in backsliding from God; begged for mercy; prayed that my life might be spared, that I might return to duty; and solemnly promised my God, if he would restore my health, that I would commence family prayer, and serve him faithfully. I soon recovered; but, oh! I forgot my vow, and continued to live at an awful remove from duty and happiness. In righteous judgment, I was again speedily brought by disease to the threshold of eternity. My mind was now tormented, as before, with distressing convictions. I reproached myself for not performing my vow. I felt that God was chastising me for my sins; and I promised again, and again, if he would spare my life *this time*, that it should be spent wholly in his service. In answer to prayer, I have gradually recovered, but am still feeble:” and lifting up his hand, a part of which had been severed by disease, he exclaimed, “there, there is the print of my disobedience!” Delighted with his ingenuousness, and wishing to ascertain his present feelings, we asked him if he had commenced family worship, to which he answered no. We then pointed out the criminality of his conduct: told him, he was acting in direct contrariety to his reason and conscience, and urged him to the immediate performance of every duty, for the sake of his own happiness, the good of his family, and the glory of God.

He acknowledged the justice of the remark; condemned himself; believed he should be happy, could he regain his former condition; but alas, he had wandered too far to think of retracing his steps. We then pointed him to the awful scenes of judgment, and urged him to duty by the retributions of eternity. He covered his face; remained silent awhile; but at length exclaimed, “I cannot, O I cannot take up the cross!” Unwilling to leave the unhappy man

without making one more effort, we reminded him, that his heavenly Father had undoubtedly been chastising him for his sins; told him if he did not repent and commence a new life, he might expect still heavier judgments; that the longer he continued in his present course, the harder it would be to return. We also brought before his mind the promises of the of the gospel, and finally made another appeal to the judgment day.

He sighed deeply; threw himself forward upon his knees, and seemed wrapt in profound thought. After remaining in this posture a short time, he sprang up, and, with a smile on his countenance, exclaimed, “*I will, I will take up the cross, and be a Christian indeed.* I will commence religious duties at my table and in my family to-night.” He caught us by the hand—blessed God for sending us—thanked us for our efforts to reclaim him; and called his family to witness that he fulfilled his promises. A smile of joy kindled up in the countenances of all present; and we left the house with the hope that our visit had not been in vain.

Backslider, beware! for judgment will not sleep for ever.—*N. H. Repository.*

RELIGION IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

The Charleston Observer contains a letter from the Rev. N. Hoyt of Beech Island, S. C. dated October 3, 1827, in which he gives a very interesting account of a revival that commenced in that place in March last. Mr. Hoyt went to Beech Island in January, 1826, before which time, it appears, the people of his present charge were destitute of regular preaching. The work commenced in Bible classes and Sunday-schools. After describing some of the traits by which it was characterized, the letter says,

There are 37 or 38 who have indulged a hope that they have passed from death unto life, during this work. Among these are 18 or 19 heads of families, males and females. Our Sunday-school has been peculi-

arly blessed. Both of our superintendents, 13 or 14 of our teachers, and 5 of our largest scholars, are among the hopeful subjects of the revival. Formerly, according to the best of my knowledge, there were but two families in the congregation in which family worship was regularly attended; and now, I believe, there are 10 or 12 families that avail themselves of that precious privilege. There are several yet seriously inquiring the way to Zion; and a few of these have been solemnly impressed from an early period in the revival. The 2d Sabbath in August was the most interesting day ever known in this place. On that day, the Rev. S. S. D. assisted me in organizing a Presbyterian church. The candidates having been previously examined, 28 individuals were associated together as a Christian church, not one of whom had ever been a member of a church before.—Some who had been examined and propounded for admission, were prevented from coming forward by sickness. The ordinance of baptism was administered to 9 persons only, the others having been previously baptized. After this, we proceeded to the solemn exercise of ordaining a ruling elder.

The church being thus regularly organized, between 30 and 40 professed disciples of Jesus sat down to commemorate the dying sufferings of their Redeemer, upon a spot, and in a house where a similar scene was never witnessed before. The house was crowded, almost to overflowing, by a solemn and attentive audience. It was a day never to be forgotten by the writer, nor, as it is to be hoped, by any of those, who on that occasion publicly took upon them the vows of the Almighty.

On the 3d Sabbath in September, in the presence of a large and attentive audience, I baptized 25 children, whose parents, one or both of them, are members of our church. Formerly, if the people were destitute of a preacher, there was no religious exercise of any kind from month to month.—But now, if destitute upon the Sabbath, they meet together, read a sermon, pray, &c. and attend to the exercises of the Sunday-school.

AUXILIARIES,

Recognized at the stated meeting of the Board of Managers, November 13, 1827.

Darnestown, (Md.) Sunday-school. Joseph Clagett, *President.* Nathl. E. Magruder, *Vice-Pres.* John Candler, Esq. *Sec. and Treas.* Charles Gasway, Capt. Alex. Brown, Ortho Boswell, John Harper, and John Lewis, *Managers.* Joseph Hawkins, jun. *Superintendent.*

Middle Brook (Md.) Sunday-school. Major G. Douglas, *Pres.* Frederick Williams, *Vice-Pres.* Major Arnol F. Vinson, *Sec. and Treas.* Richard Cromwell, Richard Henderson, Thos. G. Pery, Thomas English, and James Dessalum, *Managers.*

Charity, Southfork (N. C.) Sunday-school Society. Rev. Christian Frederick Denke, *Pres.* George Frey, sen. *Vice-Pres.* George Hege, *Sec.* Jno. George Spark, *Treas.* George Fisher, and Joseph Walk, sen. *Superintendents.* George Hege, Jesse Vogler, David Frey, Mrs. Ann Maria Denke, Elizabeth Hertel, Catharine Hege, and Charlotte Hamilton, *Teachers.*

Hebron (Ala.) Sunday-school Society. Major Samuel Atterson, *Pres.* B. Love, *Vice-Pres.* James P. Means, *Cor. Sec.* Dr. John Story, *Rec. Sec. Librarian and Treasurer.*

Barnesville (Md.) Sunday-school. William Darne, *Pres.* John Poole, sen. *Vice-Pres.* Leonard Hays, *Sec. and Treas.* Abm. S. Hays, Esq. Samuel S. Hays, William Trail, William Bennett, and J. P. Lyles, *Managers.*

Oakland (Md.) Sunday-school. Jas. Magruder, *Pres.* Major S. Griffith, *Vice-Pres.* Basil Magill, *Sec. and Treas.* Benj. Lyon, Nathl. N. Waters, Samuel Blunt, C. Thompson, and Dr. Washington Waters, *Managers.* Benj. Lyon and John Pugh, *Superintendents.*

Lisbon (Md.) Sunday-school. Capt. Charles D. Warfield, *Pres.* John D. Ringrose, *Vice-Pres.* Joshua W. Owings, Esq. *Sec. and Treas.* Dr. Augustus Riggs, Eli G. Warfield, Reuben Warfield, N. Welsh, and Bela Warfield, *Managers.* B. Crapsden, and N. D. Warfield, *Superintendents.*

